

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

6 MAY 1977

Dear Peter,

Enjoyed your letter. I'm glad you are having a good XO tour - it's a great shot in the arm to be able to run things the way you've long felt they ought to be run and to see your programs and plans bear fruit.

Regarding your stimulating comments on the impact of tactical nuclear weapons on the naval balance - I am probably as culpable as most of us in compartmenting that problem to one side and then neglecting it. I agree with your basic hypothesis that there are definite temptations to utilize nuclear weapons at sea that don't prevail on land. The key issue is whether a war that went nuclear at sea would be bound to move to shore also. I have the feeling that an opponent would have to be very concerned that that would be the case and hence there probably are some real inhibitions on initiating nuclear war at sea. We, for instance, might well have to declare that Soviet submarine bases were legitimate targets in the battle for the sea since there is such an asymmetry between the increased vulnerability of surface ships and submarines to the employment of nuclear weapons.

All of the above may simply be wishful thinking since the problem is a very intractable one. Yet, in a purely war fighting mode the Soviets have advantages in that large surface ships are the characteristic of our Navy and they are certainly very vulnerable to nuclear weapons. It seems to me this augurs for proliferation of ships and for not putting too many resources in one basket.

Delighted to hear that your book is moving along. Will look forward to reading it when it's out. It's a great project and I know it will be very useful to the fleet.

Enjoy the rest of your XO tour. I know how you feel about the fact that XO's are not supposed to enjoy that assignment. I tried to avoid it like the plague but when it was over I found it was an extremely valuable experience to have had.

All the best.

Seutemann

Yours,



STANSFIELD TURNER
Admiral, U.S. Navy